

Advice

TO PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

Shewing

['Tis their Interest to Repeal the *Test*, upon
the offer the *King* makes by a firm settle-
ment of Liberty.

PENAL LAWS are of so ill a Consequence, in
the Hands of any Party, and so uneasy to be parted
with by that which predominates, that 'tis discretion
in *Dissenters* to take this opportunity for the Repeal, now
we have a *Prince* to joyn with us to do it, when such an op-
portunity may offer again is uncertain; therefore to im-
brace this will be their Interest at the next Sessions, for up-
on better terms we are not like to obtain it, because we
have a *Prince* that wants it for his own Communion.

But 'twill be Objected, *The Penal Laws will readily be
consented to, but that cannot be done without we take off the
Test too; the consequence of which will be greater Prejudice
then the inconveniency of keeping the Penal Laws; how that
will appear, when we consider the King has promised a settlement
that is unalterable, and indeed 'tis his Wisdom so to do, if he
values the Liberty of his own Religion in an after Rain,*

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which

which may fall out to be in an Aversion to Popery, that may then endeavour the suppressing it again.

'Tis from, or however cannot be without the consent of the *King*, that we must have this Liberty ; Is it equal to expect it from him, without giving his Community the same Advantages ? Shall we ask that of him that we will not allow his ? 'tis unfair : Besides, the *Test* in the nature of it is unreasonable, because it puts a Man upon a temptation to deny that which he believes he cannot be saved without believing.

It may be Objected, *It only hinders them from getting or keeping in Offices.* If no more then that, 'tis unreasonable, for 'twill amount to nothing short of Persecution. As for Example, Suppose a *Protestant* has a Place in the Government worth Five Hundred pound a Year, & nothing but his Place to Live on, upon reading Books, or hearing Sermons, or discoursing *Papists*, he is perswaded to their Faith, and so cannot take the *Test*, upon his refusal he is turned out, and render'd incapable of procuring Maintenance for his Family ; if this is not a suffering for Conscience, I know not what is.

Again, since our Laws does not prohibit a *Roman Catholic* from being Heir to the Crown, why should they be denied having those of their Family or Guard of the same ? By our Laws none of that Perswasion can come near the Court for fear of endangering the *Kings Person*, now who is the most suitable Judge of the *Kings Safety*, either himself or a part of his People ? I think all must allow him, or else we act against our daily Experience and Practice, for who of us would not chuse Servants for our selves.

By this we may see when things are made partial, and not upon a Foundation of Equity, and short of doing as one would be done by, that one time or other it returns upon us.

'Tis

'Tis an ill thing to Test upon Peoples Religious Perswasions; if we must have them, let it be upon an honest Foot, *viz.* For the renouncing any evil Principle, that is either immoral or pernicious to the State, and then if any Man refuse to subscribe, let him be dealt with accordingly, this would be justifiable.

Why should any *Dissenters* boggle at the Repeal of the *Test*, when 'twill never be done but with them? if so, surely they have Wisdom enough to make things secure for the *Protestant Interest*, and their own *Security*, in a full enjoyment of their *Religion*. Cannot they consider of such a method that may for the future secure us from any attempts that may be made upon the violation of that general Settlement; 'tis agreed on all Hands, that Law only can secure us, which makes our *Test* so great a Bulwork; then if Law can secure us, why may not the Wisdom of a Parliament think of another Security that may be more universal? for to be sure that which takes in all Parties into its Interest is the best Policy, for if any Party is excluded that to be sure will attempt upon invading the safety of the rest, and if any one of these united Parties are Predominate, the excluded will endeavour to work in with some, or one of the Interests upon promise of bettering them, that they may assist to exterpate that Association; but if our Settlement is Universal, and that no one Perswasion can Predominate, but all in one united Interest; if any Party should through Ambition desire to break this civil Bond, and try to set up for themselves, all the rest would joyn against any such attempt, and through the disproportion of Number must of consequence be defeated; so that upon the whole, nothing can brake this general Liberty, that is equally settled, but Force, and there can be no stronger Fence against that than Unity and Universality.

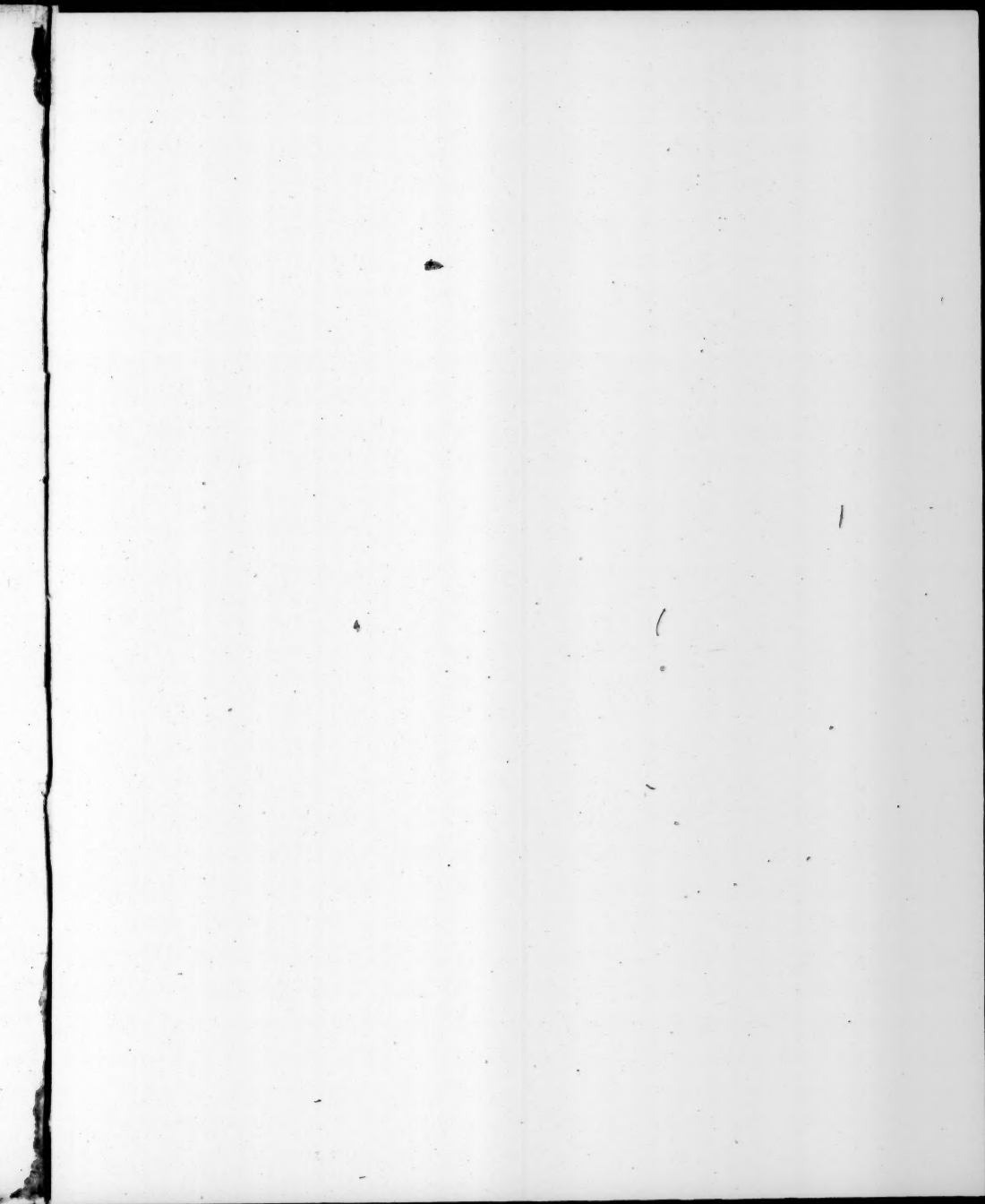
It is the Interest of the *Roman Catholicks* to accept of this, and be content with it, being the only Policy they can use for their own Safety, because they know their Number is but small, and not able of themselves to do any thing that may procure them a better Settlement. Now for People that really are for Liberty in Religion, before hand to determine, that the *King* will not concede to such a Settlement in Parliament, I think be-speaks them void of Charity: Was it the intent of any *Protestants* to give up the *Test* without an Equivolent, but rely upon Promises, that afterwards the Settlement should be made, there would appear some grounds of Jealousie? but as yet I never saw the Man that was so inclined; but that which Repealed the one, should Ratifie and Confirm the other; if so, then where's the Trust? I find there is a sort of People among *Dissenters* that harps upon this Point, I presume they are such in whom the *Church of England* have by their skill prevailed upon by their Insinuations. 'Tis true, a Man would not stop his Ears from any thing that was reasonable, from any one; but a wise Man would be very cautious of his Adversary, or one that speaks from private Interest; one if not both of these that Church will be found in; as to the first, I need not go far for proof, their Severity when they had Power sufficiently proves it, and their being now unwilling to part with it in a Parliamentary way confirms it. As to the second part, *Private Interest*, first, 'tis certain they gain nothing by this Liberty, for theirs is Established, and the giving it to others will lessen them, for if theirs is a reform from *Popery*, the *Dissenters* are a reform from them.

Again, shall we take the fair Offers of an Enemy, that may never be capable (if willing) to perform what they promise, rather then imbrace the present Kindness of the
King,

King, who offers Liberty upon our own terms, *viz.* lasting and unalterable, by no means; Providence has cast it unexpectedly upon us, therefore let us not refuse it, least we be found dispensers of our own Mercies, by waiting for that from the *Church of England* that they will not hold themselves obliged to perform; for upon whom, if we should confide, can we rely? or who is that Agent for them, that they will hold themselves obliged when capable to perform that Engagement? for my part I am at a loss to find that Person or Party.

But some may Object, *Let us be careful that we disoblige not them, least they reckon with us another Day.* As to that, let us consider what we are a doing, and how we do it; as to what, 'tis Liberty only to Worship our God securely, without interruption either by Fines or Imprisonments; next how; that we do it legally, and not with any prejudice or desire of infringing them of theirs. Now if they are displeased at this, we are sure 'tis not from a Christian Spirit that they act, and they will be found doing as they would not be done by, for no Man that is Religious desires to be restrained from the exercise of it; but I need not spend time to treat of *Liberty of Conscience to Dissenters*, for that most Men either through Conviction or Policy will consent to; but the taking away the *Test* is the great debate, for say the *Church of England*, and those that give ear to their Insinuations, *If that is gone there can be no security o the Protestant Religion.* Now as to that, in a *Roman Catholic Raign*, what service is it, are they keep for all that out of Offices and Places of Trust? No; but although we cannot prevent them of that, yet the keeping them out of the Legislative Power is our Security; but let me ask them one Question, Have they not often charged them with these Doctrines, *viz.* Not keeping Faith with *Heriticks*; or that they

they are not obliged, or don't account that of any value or tye to them that they promise to us, and farther what ever they do to us, provided 'tis to serve *Holy Church*, let the Act be ever so immoral, 'tis Meritorious; if we consider this, I cannot see that great Bulwark in the *Test* that many would have us believe; for if they may have Indulgences for these enormities, I cannot believe they will be so squemish at the *Test*, when they find the Promotion of their *Church* so mightily depends upon taking it; so that I have reason to believe the *Church of England* either to be short sighted, or intends not well to *Dissenters*, that endeavours so industriously to keep them from joyning with the *King* in Establishing a *General Liberty*; for if the *Papists* finds that the *Dissenters* breaks with them upon this Civil Union, will not they be obliged to betake themselves to the suerest way they can for their own security, which I conceive will then consist in one of these two Points, the first, To get a *Dispensation to take the Test*, or else to bring the *Church of England* into their Interest. As to the first, the *Church of England* tells us, as above, *They can do things Tantamount*; but if they have abused them in their Tenets, and they should refuse that way, but should fall in with them, what Security can they give us that they will not accept of them into their Favour, since our *Prince* is of that Perswasion? who knows but their antient pretence to Loyalty may spring again? if so, from whom must we expect Kindness, for of theirs we have had woful experience; and for the *Romanists* 'tis better joyning them when we can serve them, then to expect Favour from them, when we have deserted them. Oh, that *Dissenters* would but be wise, and take Liberty upon their own terms, and their own making, rather then to depend upon those that have been and are our Enemies; for whatever they promise now,





I look upon it but the effect of Policy, not of Kindness, that we may be wheedled out of our present certainty for hopes of Kindness when they may be capable to give it; but if they should so prevail upon the easiness of *Dissenters*, as to refuse the present opportunity; when suffering comes upon us again, we shall be obliged to take it patiently, first for Conscience, next for our *Follies* sake: I have for all this no ill will to the *Church of England*; but do wish well to her also, all that I desire is, that their ill Nature, together with the assistance of *Penal Laws*, that have put them upon doing wrong, to their Reproach, that she would now consent to the taking away that, that when the same ill Nature predominates again may disable them from doing what they have been so prone too; for a Man that is convicted of an Evil, will endeavour to shun the opportunity of a Temptation, and until the *Church of England* comes so far, that is to be willing to part with that Pestilence they have been so infected with, I cannot conceive any Reformation among them. For a Man to tell me that has been given to Drunkenness, that he is Reformed, yet cannot forsake the Tavern and his Familiars that continued in that excess, I should have but small hopes of his Reformation; and although he might decline Drinking for the present, I should only judge it some Indisposition, for no Man loves to keep up that which he Loathes; so if I would abandon Persecution I shall be willing to part with that which would tolerate me in it, for fear of a Temptation; and when we see the *Church of England* willing to part with all *Penal Laws* for Religion, we may have hopes they are not in love with Severity, and till then 'tis in vain to pretend to the contrary, for Actions speaks louder then Words, and Performance is better then Promises. I look upon it a meer wheedle in the *Church of England* to tell us, they are for giving Liber-

ty of *Conscience*, and yet oppose the *Tests* being taken away, for to be sure they conclude themselves safe in the offer; for me to offer that which I imagine will not be accepted is almost the same with no offer, which is the case of them. As for Example, If I proffer a Man Fifty Pounds to be received of a Person, that 'tis at his pleasure to pay it or no, and 'tis evident the doing it will prove inconvenient to his Affairs; how unlikely would it be that he should comply with the payment? Just so is the offer the *Church of England* makes to the *Dissenters*, they promise to Repeal the *Penal Statutes*, which they cannot perform but with the Concurrence of the *King*; and is it likely it should be obtained that way, without taking off the *Test* too? for can we expect he should set us quite free, and continue Bonds upon his one Communion?

'Tis easie for Men to offer that which is out of their power to give, and hard to get such Men to part with what is in their power to keep; but thanks be to *God*, if the *Dissenters* will, 'tis in the *Kings* and their power (under *God*) to make themselves easie whether the *Church of England* will or no.

With Allowance.

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